



Actor Steve Guttenberg (right) welcomes Lorus Hotels President Jon Tisch to Alaska.

AH&MA Convention Stresses Environmental Issues

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promote environmentalism in hotels.

The AH&MA surpassed its \$6 million goal for the Hospitality 2000 Campaign to underwrite Educational Institute programs and scholarships with the donation of \$750,000 by American Express and through late donations by several hotel companies—reaching \$6.1 million.

The AH&MA also announced its Partner Program to recognize industry vendors who support it in its programs and materials.

With the future of the industry in mind, the "Good Earthkeeping" program was introduced by members of the AH&MA Environmental Committee, an initiative in which cards are for sale to hotels to alert guests that they can opt to keep the same bed

sheets and built towels during their stay, allowing the hotel to conserve water used for laundry. The program also provides a "green" workbook for hotels to encourage the use of other programs, such as recycling, energy conservation and waste reduction. A 30-minute educational video by the AH&MA was created to support both efforts.

Careful fabricated cards with a heart-shaped earth logo on them invite guests to place the cards on their pillows to decline the changing of sheets and to hang on towel racks to retain used towels in the room, so that the hotels will save their wishes. The "Environmental Action Pack for Hotels," funded by the Diersey Corp., gives hoteliers a host of ideas for making their properties more environmentally sensitive—an approach that will save the hotels money while instilling goodwill with guests, according to Dan Darroch, president of Palm Hospitality Company and chairman of the AH&MA Environmental Committee.

Ken Hite, AH&MA president/CEO, said that similar to electronic checks and other advances, the Good Earthkeeping program addresses the future of the industry and what the majority of guests will want.

Todd Saunders, president of Ecological Solutions and an advisor to the Saunders Hotel Group, said that the Good Earthkeeping program will appeal to guests who are looking for environmentally-conscious businesses to patronize.

"We don't sacrifice individual travelers, but we have learned for a number of years the impact that it's made on meeting planners and it really differentiates the hotel from others when all else is equal," Saunders said.

The initiative is expected to potentially save a tremendous amount of water and energy, not to mention labor costs for time spent in changing bed sheets once hotels nationwide implement it. Cards offered by the AH&MA at a nominal cost will be printed in five languages.

Curtis Williams, chairman of the AH&MA, said that in the year that his company, Interwestern Management, has been using a similar water conservation program, he has seen "amazingly few requests" to change sheets or towels.

The AH&MA video features four hotels that use environmental programs: the Best Western Space Shuttle Inn, Titusville, FL; The Westin Hotel Seattle; Disney's Wilderness Lodge, Lake Buena Vista, FL; and the Saunders Hotel Group in Boston.

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